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ABSTRACT

This book offers a generalized way of examining the moral significance of what occurs in classrooms, with a focus on analyzing classroom interactions from a symbolic/expressive point of view. The book's ideas were derived from the Moral Life of Schools Project, a 2-year study that investigated the ways in which moral considerations permeate the everyday life of schools and classrooms. Methodology included: (1) observations in 18 classrooms located in 2 public, 2 independent, and 2 parochial schools; and (2) conversations with the teachers. Part 1 offers two sets of categories of moral influence within classrooms. The first set involve deliberate moral instruction; the second set concern less obvious moral practice, which is the focus of the book. Part 2 offers four sets of observations that illustrate the process by which an expressive understanding of classroom life might be developed. The third part presents four more sets of observations and examines how classroom observations contain an inherent bias toward singling out the problematic and questionable. Part 4 describes ways to cultivate expressive awareness in schools and classrooms and describes how to look at classroom events from a moral perspective. The postscript contains 110 annotated references. (LMI)

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